

smaller and appearing higher up than in the preceding case, forming a protuberance directly under the union of the external with the middle third of the clavicle. Plate 60 displays the operation.

After this brief description of the first two parts of the voluminous work under our eyes, it will be recognized by the medical public as possessing practical facts of a greater or less value.

It constitutes, as its name indicates, a true iconographical clinique. It is perhaps to be regretted that so rich a publication has not brought to light more new facts or elucidated some difficult points, and above all is it to be regretted that the author has not given some drawings of pathological histology, and exposed his opinions upon the structure of morbid tissues and their microscopic examination. It must not be forgotten, however, that the end of the author is only to spread the most interesting cases occurring in his practice, or on the other hand that histological and microscopical investigations have not as yet made the same progress in Russia as in France and Germany.

PARIS, November 12th, 1849.

S. L. B.

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ART. XXVI.—*An Introductory Lecture, delivered in the Medical College of Georgia, November 5th, 1849.* By PAUL F. EVE, M.D., Professor of Surgery; Editor of the Southern Medical and Surgical Journal; one of the late Vice-Presidents of the American Medical Association. 8vo. pp. 24.

THE lecture of Dr. Eve is devoted to a candid, manly, and sensible examination into the present position of the medical profession in society. While he evinces a just sense of the dignity and importance of the healing art, and of its just claims upon the consideration of the community and the protection of the laws, the lecturer hesitates not to admit that it does not occupy that high rank in public opinion, which the important services it renders to man in the prevention, mitigation, and removal of his physical sufferings, and in the prolongation of his life, demand for it, and indicates some of the causes, extrinsic as well as intrinsic, from which this has resulted.

The first of these causes, adduced by the lecturer, is "the want of harmony among its advocates." That a want of good feeling does to a certain extent exist among the members of the medical profession, Dr. Eve admits and deplores.

"Those," he remarks, "who are continually dealing with diseases and death, who daily see poor frail humanity in its worst estate; who know full well the uncertainty and difficulties of their art, and their own liability to mistakes, should be kind and forbearing to each other. Few can estimate the injury done to the profession of medicine, by its members judging harshly of the acts of each other, by exaggerating reports, by a want of strict conformity to the truth, by personal disputes or professional controversy, by hasty and inconsiderate publications. The character of our noble calling ought to induce a forgiving spirit, to subdue envy, jealousy, and every evil passion, and prevent the exposure of the imperfections of an erring brother."

But while the fact is freely acknowledged, that there is not that harmony among physicians which should exist; and further, that there exists among the different members of the profession, and must exist on so intricate and difficult a subject as the art of knowing and healing diseases is known to be, a difference of opinion and of practice, still Dr. Eve insists that the degree and extent of this difference are greatly exaggerated by the community.

"Doctors truly disagree, must necessarily, since their science is based upon ever changing complicated matter; but that there exists among us as contradictory and opposite opinions regarding the principles of our profession as is generally supposed, we do most unhesitatingly deny. Because we employ various and apparently contrary agents, and people cannot understand their action, we are condemned as opposed to each other. When physicians are called to a case of fever, and one proposes bleeding, another prescribes purgatives, a third gives tartar emetic, a fourth digitalis, a fifth nitre, it is at once



concluded that they differ, when in truth they all harmonize; they are aiming at one and the same result, the reduction of the arterial action and febrile excitement. Moreover, as a purgative, one may select calomel, another some one of the various salts, or oils, or senna, gamboge, scammony; or of digitalis, one might give the tincture, a second the infusion, a third the substance; and thus a hundred different opinions respecting fever alone would be obtained, still in reality they will co-operate and concur in producing the same effect. People too, forget that the human system is something more than a machine; that it has vitality independent of all obvious motion or action, and that besides, no two human constitutions are precisely alike. A London medical periodical has just affirmed that what cured cholera in one street, would not cure it in another. None of us can predict the full effects of even a single dose of medicine. We cannot, therefore, adopt any routine practice, any invariable system of treating diseases; this is the blind and reckless course of empiricism; but we must, in order to apply our agents intelligently and effectually, vary them, according to the peculiar and ever changing circumstances attending each case. If society knew more of the principles of medicine, we would hear far less of that trite remark, 'How doctors disagree.'

"We do not know, however, that the diversity of opinions among practitioners of medicine is greater than among the advocates of other professions. There is no vocation so free from the sin of controversy and strife, that it may with impunity cast the first stone at physicians. Impostors and bad men are to be found in all the walks of life. They are met with in politics, in law, in theology, as well as in medicine. We have quacks even in religion. The differences between physicians have generally been dependent on minor points; as the therapeutic action of some remedy, and are seldom so thorough or radical as to affect the science itself. Of course we exclude all from our order, who, having adopted any special or peculiar system of treatment, are termed irregular practitioners; it matters not whether such have a diploma or not, they have cast themselves without the pale of medical science and should no longer be recognized as belonging to the profession. With this explanation we assert, that, as a body, we do agree on the great principles of medicine, however we may differ in practice, or in the application of our remedial means to disease. We do concur in the leading doctrines, upon which medicine as a science is founded."

The *second* reason adduced by the lecturer, why public confidence does not obtain in the medical profession is, that the errors of *all who administer physic* are charged on the profession. No distinction being made between the learned and the illiterate in medicine; between the physician and the quack. He points out the total neglect by our legislatures of the regular, skillful and experienced, members of the profession, and the baneful effects produced by the legalization of quackery in some of the states. Each individual is guaranteed by law "not only the full right to do what he pleases with his own health," but the privilege of interfering by every possible means with that of others.

"All empirical systems of treating diseases have, or may at any time, and from any state, obtain the power and authority to confer the degree of M. D., which is also daily assumed with impunity, so that it is now difficult to distinguish the regular from the irregular practitioner of the healing art—all are presumed to belong to the medical profession, which, consequently, is made to bear the faults of all. In the modern onslaught upon disease, no distinction is made between the disciplined soldier and the volunteer, or even the miserable camp follower, ever ready for pillage, rapine, or murder; all are supposed to belong to the same corps, which suffers for the bad conduct of either a part or the whole."

A *third* cause laid down by Dr. Eve for the present unfavourable opinion respecting our profession is, that it is *judged by those unqualified to form a correct decision.*

"The case," he remarks, "is the standing of the medical profession: its only advocates are physicians, while the community, constituting judge and jury, and never having examined the merits of our cause, do not understand its nature or character, and cannot comprehend our pleadings; yet they, neverthe-



less, are generally prepared to give a verdict against us. A case seldom terminates unsuccessfully, but the physician is *sure* to be censured for it; a fatal epidemic never prevails, but physicians are charged with not understanding its management. We are constantly condemned by those who confess never to have studied our science. On all other subjects, it is admitted that, before giving an opinion, it ought to be carefully considered; it is allowed to be a reasonable requirement in everything else, that the question to be decided should be fully comprehended: study and labour are necessary to the acquisition of all other knowledge—but to all this, medical science constitutes a *wonderful* exception. Without the least acquaintance with anatomy, or of the laws regulating the animal economy; without any information in medicine, many consider themselves pretty good physicians—competent at once to prescribe for and treat all diseases; and the only hindrance they encounter to an extensive business is that, in recommending their own peculiar mode of treatment and attempting to proselyte their neighbours, these, in turn, are found equally qualified, and just as successful, though it may be by a very opposite system of medication. These intuitive, self-made doctors, may not be able to distinguish an artery from a vein, a nerve from a tendon; know not where the stomach, liver, or lungs are situated: are even uninformed as to the composition of the water they drink, or the air they breathe; yet they talk about nervous diseases, the impurity of the blood, the opening of the pores, and the reaction of the system. What though they be ignorant of the healthy functions of the heart, or of any other organ of the body, they know all its disorders, can cure all diseases, and this, too, without ever having investigated them; are familiar with the virtues of all remedies and nostrums, without once inquiring into their composition; and are the special patrons of all exclusive patented systems of practice. Without condescending to dissect, without stopping to investigate the experience of ages, or improve by the observations of others; without doing so vulgar a thing as to study or labour at all in medicine; still uniform success crowns all their efforts. Alike ignorant of what constitutes health or disease, and, if possible, still more so of the effects of the agents they employ as remedies, they flatter themselves that every favourable change occurring in a case, is to be attributed exclusively to their prescriptions, not knowing that nature unassisted, even in spite of bad medication, is competent alone to cure a majority of our diseases.”

“To prove that the community is not prepared to render a correct opinion of the importance of medical science to society, we need only refer to the custom and practices of the day. The whole system of empiricism is founded upon human credulity in what is novel, marvelous, or mysterious in treating diseases, and in the popular supposition that every one can best judge what is good or hurtful to his own system. In conformity to these views, we find every person recommending, and that most strenuously, some favourite prescription, some peculiar system of practice, or some nostrum. So universal is this habit of prescribing, that for any complaint whatever one may instantly obtain a thousand pretended specifics. No man ever thinks of committing the navigation of a ship to an uneducated sailor; but for derangements of the human system, the most ignorant are often implicitly trusted. It was once thought that no one having a *conscience* would ever prescribe, order, or suggest medicine for a sick person, without he had previously obtained a medical education. But now even timid women boldly assume that difficult and responsible task, and have no hesitation to criticise the prescriptions of physicians.”

A very severe but just censure is cast by the lecturer upon the proprietors, venders, and advocates of secret medicines and nostrums generally; while the idea that each individual of the community is fully competent to judge of the remedial powers of the remedies he takes—no matter by whose advice—and their adaptation to his constitution and ailments, is very effectually exposed.

A *fourth* reason Dr. Eve presents, why medicine does not rank higher among the learned professions is, that so little has been done for it by the public.

The *fifth* and last reason for the unfavourable opinion entertained by the public for the medical profession is that, as a science, it is the most difficult, obscure, and complicated of all human learning.



"No other occupation in life involves such varied and minute knowledge, such careful observation of nature, such constant and absorbing study, such heavy responsibilities. The principles of other sciences are well defined and are unchanging, as they are founded upon inanimate matter, in which the actions are regular and uniform, and can be calculated on with certainty. Medicine, on the contrary, has to do with that which is in continual turmoil, and subjected to a thousand varying circumstances and affecting causes. Our science rests, in fact, upon human life. Now, besides the direct evidence given us by Revelation, daily observation teaches us the great uncertainty of this—of all earthly events, death may be considered the only one absolutely certain. If, then, medical science is based upon so shadowy and fleeting a thing as human life, what must necessarily be its character? Can the practice of medicine ever be *certain*?

"Disease, too, is not a substance any more than is cold. We see the effects of a privation of heat or caloric in ice, snow, it may be, or in frozen mercury or carbonic acid gas; so we observe the results of a derangement of health, be it in pleurisy, dyspepsia, or a thorn in the flesh. Disease is a perversion of the natural office, or healthy function, in one or more organs; and it may vary in kind or degree. So also of our therapeutic agents; there can be *no remedy for a disease*. A specific never has been discovered, and it will be in vain that a gentleman of Europe has just offered an hundred thousand francs for one for cholera. Each individual has a peculiar constitution, as he has a peculiar countenance, by which he is recognized; and no medicine whatever will have precisely the same effect upon any two persons. All we can do is to determine the general action of our agents, and so far from predicting the specific results, every dose of medicine may be considered somewhat as an enlightened experiment."

"Medical science is not perfect. We still have mysteries—life itself is a mystery. We do not know the cause of cholera; the same may be said of many other affections; still we are bending all our energies, sparing no expense, in time, labour, or money, in the deeply interesting research after the causation of diseases. But, independent of all inherent difficulties and obstacles to success in the practice of medicine, there are many others derived from sources over which the physician can exercise no control. These cannot now be even enumerated; but we must not omit to mention the fact, that within the first year after the drug bill passed by Congress went into operation, no less than ninety thousand pounds of spurious and adulterated articles, imported into this country for medicine, were arrested at the port of New York alone! Then, again, how often are we thwarted by the misconduct of patients? and how many imitate Alexander the Great in this respect! Plutarch relates that amidst one of his festivities, his friend, Hephæstion, fell sick; being a young man and a soldier, he did not like to be put upon spare diet, and taking advantage, while his physician, Glaucus, had gone to the theatre, he ate a roasted fowl and drank a flagon of wine, made as cold as possible, in consequence of which he died soon after. Alexander's grief exceeded all bounds, and he *crucified* the poor physician."

It is to be regretted that the truths which Dr. Eve has so clearly set forth, will not reach those who can alone rectify the injustice which has been and still continues to be committed towards our profession. A just appreciation of the causes that have tended to place the healing art in a position far below what its importance demands for it in society, should be entertained by every physician; but the removal of those causes requires that the public mind should be enlightened on subjects in which their own interests are deeply involved, namely, the true character of the profession of medicine, the actual services rendered by it to society, the respect due to its professors, and the importance of extending to it the support of public opinion and patronage against the encroachments of quackery and ignorant pretension, whether in the professed empiric, the domestic prescriber, or in the gossip of the nursery and sick chamber. But the proper means of effecting this, if it be possible by any means to effect it, we pretend not to suggest.

D. F. C.